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Title: History of Richard 2

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“I see the bathtub  
bubble eater from  
Moonglow finally produced  
that infernal child. Best  
that I take it before she  
corrupts the boy with  
whatever they teach  
those pacifist mages on  
that pitiful island” A  
man dressed in casual  
black leather armor  
barged into the room,  
knocking over several  
midwives as he approached  
the bedridden mother and  
her child.

“No! You will not have  
him, you have taken  
everything from me,  
without this child I am  
nothing, I will never  
permit you to do this!”  
The woman screamed  
frantically as tears  
streamed from her eyes.

“Then you will be  
nothing. I will take pity  
on you for giving birth  
to a son this day, be  
thankful for my mercy.”  
The High Advocate  
strayed his hands towards  
his sides, and drawing a  
dagger, accurately  
implanted its blade in the  
woman’s neck, trailing  
blood over the once again  
crying child.

“What is the child’s  
name, answer me or join  
your mistress!” The High  
Advocate screamed into  
the crowd of midwives  
huddled together in a  
fearful embrace.

“Richard my lord... his name is Richard... please, let us leave, we mean no harm to you or your family...” a midwife stuttered, looking with tear stained eyes at the figure grasping the newborn child.

“Richard... your name shall be changed upon your induction into the Way. Until then, you shall retain the weakness of your lineage.” The High Advocate spoke to the child, striding with heavy footsteps out of the small hut nestled on the outskirts of the busy city of Moonglow.

“Zealot Terangal, take this child and begin his training immediately. I want the lore of the Way read to him as bedtime stories, I want the conditioning of his mind to be complete, I want him to live and breathe the path of the sword. He is the woman’s son now, but he shall be mine soon enough.” The High Advocate screamed at one of the entourage stationed outside of the hut. “Prepare the boats before the infernal mages find out we are here, we shall sail towards the temple this evening.”

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The sun began to set into golden waters as an old mage stood upon a cliff overlooking the horizon. A katana stood at his side, at conflict with the wardrobe of a scribe draped over his figure. “I shall never

forget you grandson of Richard. If you are your mother's son I shall see you again, just as she promised. If not... I pray for what I will have to do."

### Chapter Three- The Way of the Sword

The dark forest lay nestled within the western reaches of the Minoc peninsula, stretching a great distance to the west, where the mountains and ocean stopped its path. A child of no more than eight years of age stood upon a small outcropping of stone. Trees and wildlife bustled about around him; insects crawled over the child's flesh, some biting as beads of sweat built up upon his skin. The child stood unflinching as he neared his second day of fasting and concentration, despite the horrible hunger pains and insect bites that wracked his fragile form.

"Excellent, you may be blessed with acknowledgment of my lineage yet, Richard." A roughly dressed High Advocate spoke, releasing the child from his concentration.

"You have lasted twice as long as even the most prodigal student of our order. However, it will take much more than two days of fasting to remove the shame of your blood. You are still a disgrace by nature. Report to your sleeping area, you have one hour to bathe and eat with the rest of the students

before you are prepared  
for combat training.” The  
High Advocate threw the  
boy to the ground,  
sneering as the child  
scampered towards his  
sleeping area.

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“You can do better  
then that you worthless  
runt!” a darkly clad fully  
grown soldier barked at a  
blue eyed child engaging  
him in ruthless one on  
one combat. The child  
feigned to the right as  
his blade met with his  
attackers, sending sounds  
of clashing metal into the  
cool late afternoon air.  
The child stepped  
backwards while parrying  
several of the soldiers  
well aimed blows, and  
eventually in his retreat,  
caught the tip of a rock  
and fell harshly  
backwards. The child began  
to raise his sword and  
whimper as the soldier  
approached him with a  
gloating countenance.  
“Now its time to add a  
scar to you for a failed  
lesson boy. I don’t agree  
with your fathers  
methods, but orders are  
orders.” The soldier  
raised his blade in the  
air and aimed a savage  
strike at the boy’s  
midsection. The boy lunged  
back, and with several  
graceful movements, took  
advantage of his  
opponents lowered defense,  
leaving a deep and bloody  
gash along the soldier’s  
upper torso, a hair length  
away from the neck.

“Never think you have  
defeated an opponent until  
you have his ashes within

your hands, Eoric. The boy grinned and kept his blade readied in a defensive stance, in case of any aggression by his defeated sparring companion.

“Sometimes I swear you speak with your father’s words, Richard. You definitely fight with his sword arm.” The soldier limped away from the battle circle as the group of young trainees stood wide eyed at the defeated swords trainer and the High Advocates son.

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“Keil, when you look towards the ocean, what do you see?” Two children stood upon a small hill of rock overlooking the waters of the northern seas. Blood dripped slightly from the older boy’s chest as he stood exhausted after a testing duel.

“I don’t bloody know... water?” The older boy panted and gasped for air as he spoke labored words.

“I see...so much... so much space, so peaceful, untouched by war or fear, entirely pure.” The child stood in a serene pose, looking over the waters as the sun began to sink deep beneath the waves.

“Damnit Richard, you sit there so calm and peaceful after that horrendously long sparring session. You weren’t even trying, look at you,

you're not even sweating,  
you look like a blasted  
noble with that spotless  
armor of yours." The  
older boy sat down to  
regain his breath, glaring  
almost comically at the  
younger boy staring out  
towards the horizon.

"Keil, you speak more  
then a blasted noble, shut  
up and catch your breath.  
We will go back to the  
sleeping quarters and  
catch an early rest;  
tomorrow I hear we will  
be practicing group battle  
tactics." The younger boy  
returned the comical grin  
and continued to stare  
into the endless horizon  
of water and drowned  
sunlight.